

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 AGR-10 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /041 W
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R 131916Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7909
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMCONSUL CURACAO
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 1450

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR TGEN TD

SUBJECT: DROUGHT CONDITIONS

ALSO FOR AID

REF: STATE 127148

1. FOLLOWING APPLIES TO TRINIDAD ONLY, SINCE TOBAGO IS A RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT FOOD PRODUCER. PATTERN OF RAINFALL IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN TOTAL AMOUNT. FOR EXAMPLE, MORE RAIN FELL ON TRINIDAD IN 1973 THAN PREVIOUS YEAR BUT SHARP DROP IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION WAS DUE TO EXTENDED DRY SEASON WITH MOST RAIN COMING LAST THREE MONTHS OF 1973. WHILE LESS RAIN FELL IN 1974, PATTERN OVER THE YEAR WAS SUCH THAT MOST CROP PRODUCTION IMPROVED.

2. TRINIDAD PRECIPITATION DATA RE DIVIDED INTO EASTERN AREA (EA) OF 14 STATIONS AND DRIER WESTERN AREA (WA) OF 16 STATIONS. EA INCLUDES MOST CROPS AND ALL SUGAR CANE WHILE WA INCLUDES SOME COFFEE, COCOA, RICH AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTION. THIRTY-FOUR-YEAR MEAN ANNUAL RAINFALL IN EA IS 100.8 INCHES COMPARED WITH 71.45 INCHES IN WA. LAST
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SEVERAL YEARS HAVE BEEN BELOW THESE FIGURES. 1974 EA

WAS 80.57 INCHES AND WA WAS 51.72 INCHES.

3. FIRST 3 MONTHS OF 1975 RAINFALL EA 9.19 INCHES AND
WA 4.25 INCHES COMPARED WITH 1974 EA 15.02 INCHES AND
WA 8.32 INCHES INDICATE ANOTHER DRY YEAR IN THE MAKING.
DELAYED START OF RAINY SEASON COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, BUT IT IS TOO EARLY TO QUANTIFY.

4. TRINIDAD'S FOOD IMPORTS ROSE SHARPLY TO \$125 MILLION
IN 1974 (COMPARED WITH \$77 MILLION IN 1973) DUE PARTLY TO
DROUGHT-INDUCED DECREASED DOMESTIC FOOD PRODUCTION AND
PARTLY TO HIGHER WORLD PRICES. TOTAL FOOD IMPORTS WILL
PROBABLY INCREASE FURTHER IN 1975, BUT SHOULD NOT BE A
HEAVY BURDEN ON THE ECONOMY DUE TO TRINIDAD'S STRONG
FOREIGN RESERVE POSITION.
RICH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DATA, DROUGHTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PORTO01450
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750207-0776
From: PORT OF SPAIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750652/aaaabvq.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 127148
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 FEB 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 FEB 2003 by PhilliR0>; APPROVED <12 FEB 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DROUGHT CONDITIONS ALSO FOR AID
TAGS: EAGR, TGEN, TD
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006